

The Kingdom of God has no price tag on it: It is worth as much as you have. For Zacchaeus it was worth half of what he owned, because the other half that he had unjustly pocketed he promised to restore fourfold. For Peter and Andrew it was worth the nets and vessel they had left behind; for the widow it was worth two copper coins; for another it was worth a cup of cold water. So, as we have said, the Kingdom of Heaven is worth as much as you have.

Saint Gregory Dialogos



**22 January is the
Fifteenth Sunday of Luke**

Matins Gospel: John 20:19-31

Epistle: 1 Timothy 4:9-15

Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

Angelic powers were above Thy tomb, and they that guarded Thee became as dead. And Mary stood by the grave seeking Thine immaculate Body. Thou hast despoiled Hades and wast not tried thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst grant us life. O Thou Who didst arise from the dead, Lord, glory be to Thee.

Seasonal Kontakion:

Your birth sanctified a Virgin's womb and properly blessed the hands of Symeon. Having now come and saved us O Christ our God, give peace to Your commonwealth in troubled times and strengthen those in authority, whom You love, as only the loving One.

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday, 23 January: Philippians 3:20-21; 4:1-3; Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-5
Hieromartyr Clement; Martyr Agathangelus

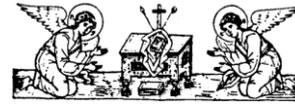
Tuesday, 24 January: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2; Mark 6:1-7
Xenia, Deaconess of Rome; Hieromartyr Babylas

Wednesday, 25 January: Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2; John 10:9-16
Gregory the Theologian; Synaxis of the New Martyrs of Russia

Thursday, 26 January: Ephesians 4:14-17; Mark 6:30-45
Xenophon & his Companions; Symeon the Elder

Friday, 27 January: Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2; John 10:9-16
Relics of John Chrysostom; Peter the Righteous of Egypt

Saturday, 28 January: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2; Luke 6:17-23
Ephraim the Syrian; Isaac the Syrian; James the Righteous



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

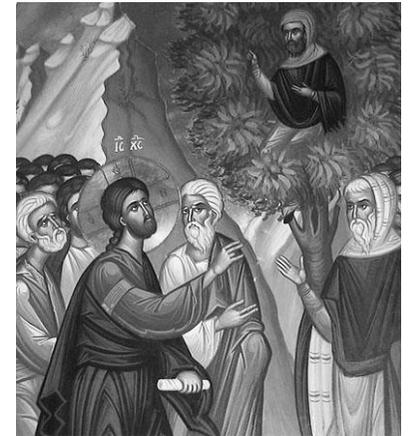
22 January 2017

Zacchaeus, Come Down

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of the charming and yet deeply challenging conversion of Zacchaeus. As a tax collector, he was regarded as an outcast among his own people because he collaborated with the Roman occupiers and enriched himself in the process. When Jesus came into Jericho, Zacchaeus wanted to see him but he was too short to see over the heads of others and so climbed a sycamore tree. Aware that he was there, Jesus Christ called to him to come down and announced that he was coming to his house. Zacchaeus responded with joy, welcomed Jesus Christ into his home, and committed himself to giving half of his property to the poor and paying back those whom he had cheated fourfold.

Zacchaeus was clearly curious about Jesus Christ, yet he was also uneasy. Aware of his outcast status and perhaps also awkward because of his shortness, he hid in a tree where he could see what was going on, and yet also remain at a certain distance to it. We may also feel drawn to a life of faith and be aware that something is missing in our lives, and yet we draw back, conscious of our own inadequacies or afraid of what others will think of us. Yet Jesus Christ cut through Zacchaeus' defenses; He addressed him directly and knew exactly what he needed.

Jesus announces that he is coming to Zacchaeus' house. In Biblical language that meant that he was coming to share in Zacchaeus' life and to be in a relationship with him. Welcoming Jesus Christ into our lives means getting to know Him and allowing Him to get to know us, including the parts of ourselves that we would rather He doesn't see. But it is only through this that we can find true healing and peace and take the steps we need to take to be reconciled both to God and to those around us.



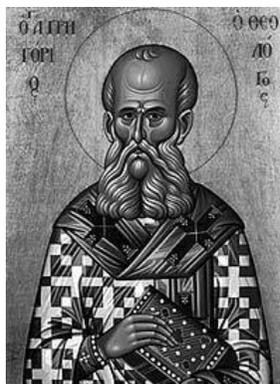
Cleanse your mind from anger, remembrance of evil, and shameful thoughts, and then you will find out how Christ dwells in you.

Saint Maximus the Confessor

Saint Gregory the Theologian

On Wednesday, we commemorate St Gregory the Theologian, one of only three holy Fathers whom the Church has honored with the title “the Theologian” (the others are St John the Evangelist and Theologian, and St Symeon the New Theologian).

St Gregory was born in 329 in Arianzus in Cappadocia to a pious and holy family. His father Gregory, mother Nonna, brother Caesarius, and sister Gorgonia are all counted among the saints of the Church. St Gregory studied in Palestine, then in Alexandria, and then in Athens. In Athens, Gregory’s fellow students included St Basil the Great and the future Emperor Julian the Apostate.



The friendship between Gregory and Basil blossomed into a true spiritual friendship and they were loving brothers in Christ for the rest of their lives. After completing their studies, Sts Gregory and Basil lived together as monks in a hermitage at Pontus. Much against St Gregory’s will, his father ordained him a priest, and St Basil consecrated him Bishop of Sasima (in the Archdiocese of Caesarea, over which St Basil was Archbishop).

In 381, when the Second Ecumenical Council condemned Macedonius, Archbishop of Constantinople, and appointed St Gregory in his place. When he arrived in the City, he found that the Arians controlled all the churches, and he was forced to “rule” from a small house chapel. From there he preached his five great sermons on the Trinity, the *Triadika*. These were so powerful and influential that when he left Constantinople two years later, every church in the city had been restored to the Orthodox.

St Gregory was always a theologian and a contemplative rather than an administrator, and the duties of Archbishop were agonizing to him. In 382 he received permission from a council of his fellow-bishops and the Emperor to retire from the see of Constantinople. He returned to Nazianzus (for which reason he is sometimes called St Gregory of Nazianzus). There he reposed in peace in 391 at the age of sixty-two.

His writings show a theological depth and a sublimity of expression perhaps unsurpassed in the Church. His teaching on the Holy Trinity is a great bastion of Orthodox Faith. And in almost every one of his published homilies he preaches the Trinity undivided and of one essence.



Human beings have accumulated in their coffers gold and silver, clothes more sumptuous than useful, diamonds and other objects that are evidence of war and tyranny; then a foolish arrogance hardens their hearts; for their brothers in distress, no pity. What utter blindness! . . . Attend not to the law of the strong but to the law of the Creator. Help nature to the best of your ability, honor the freedom of creation, protect your species from dishonor, come to its aids in sickness, rescue it from poverty . . . Seek to distinguish yourself from others only in your generosity. Be like gods to the poor, imitating God’s mercy. Humanity has nothing so much in common with God as the ability to do good.”

Saint Gregory the Theologian

Saint Ephrem the Syrian

On Saturday, we commemorate Saint Ephrem the Syrian, one of the Church’s greatest poet-theologians. He was born in Nisbis, on the border of the Roman and Persian empires, where he spent most of his life. He became a monk and a deacon, combining a strict ascetical life with service to the Church.

As a young man Saint Ephrem acquired a deep love of the Holy Scriptures, and meditated deeply on them. His writings, which often took poetic form, were full of biblical imagery, which he used to point to its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.



In the later part of his life Saint Ephrem was affected by the war between the Romans and the Persians. He moved to Edessa, where he taught in its school and coordinated charitable work for those affected by the war. He also countered the teachings of the heretics who he found there by composing popular hymns that expressed the truth of the faith and were enthusiastically sung by the people.

Many of Saint Ephrem’s hymns were incorporated into the Church’s liturgical texts, and his works were soon translated into Greek, Latin, Armenian, Georgian, and Slavonic, and, more recently, into other languages. They show his fiery devotion to Christ and his deep insight into human reality as it is transformed by a life of repentance.



The Light of the just and joy of the upright is Christ Jesus our Lord.
Begotten of the Father, He manifested himself to us.
He came to rescue us from darkness and to fill us with the radiance of His light.
Day is dawning upon us; the power of darkness is fading away.

From the true Light there arises for us the light which illumines our darkened eyes.
His glory shines upon the world and enlightens the very depths of the abyss.
Death is annihilated, night has vanished, and the gates of Sheol are broken.
Creatures lying in darkness from ancient times are clothed in light.
The dead arise from the dust and sing because they have a Savior.
He brings salvation and grants us life. He ascends to his Father on high.
He will return in glorious splendor and shed His light on those gazing upon Him.

Our King comes in majestic glory.

Let us light our lamps and go forth to meet Him.
Let us find our joy in Him, for He has found joy in us.
He will indeed rejoice us with His marvelous light.

Saint Ephrem the Syrian